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AN AMERICAN PAPER FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

## CIVILIZATION'S TEST IN SAMOA.

### I. The Powers.

The Samoan question is still critical, but to doubt its peaceful settlement is to insult the statesmanship of America, Germany and England. Here are three nations, containing 175,000,000 civilized people. All these people have a common desire—to do what is right and just. Naturally, each country thinks that justice requires a scrupulous regard for its own rights and interests, but that does not imply a wish on the part of any to encroach on the rights of the others. Would it not be an intolerable absurdity for these 175,000,000 people to come to blows over a group of islands smaller than the Miller & Lux cattle ranches in California, and inhabited by 34,000 savages and 400 whites, of whom 203 are British, 120 German and 26 Americans?

It is true that German officials in barbarous countries are often extremely hard to get along with. Many of them are unmannerly, overbearing and totally lacking in tact. They know nothing of the Scriptural principle that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." The proceedings of Consul Rose at Apia have been most exasperating, and his official announcement that the American Admiral's proclamation was "quite false" was an example of "shirt-sleeve diplomacy" to which it would be hard to find a parallel.

But we are not going to settle the Samoan question with Consul Rose. We are dealing with the German people, not with a self-important little official ten thousand miles from home, and we know that the German people, like the American people, want peace and harmony.

### II. The Samoans.

And while we are trying to reconcile the rival claims of the United States, Great Britain and Germany, we must not forget the paramount rights of the most deeply interested though least powerful party to the dispute—the Samoan people. The United States has always appeared in those islands as the protector of the natives. It was in that character that we opposed the German aggressions ten years ago. It would be a pity if we should find ourselves now striving to put down a majority of the Samoans in the interest of a minority. The question of the desires of the natives is one that should be most thoroughly examined by the Commissioners of the powers when they go to Apia.

### III. The Unlaid Cable.

Again we have the old lesson of the need for a Pacific cable. All this trouble has come about because the representatives of the powers in Samoa have been cut off from their home governments, and have developed into petty autocrats. If Consul Rose had been within reach of cable orders from Berlin he would never have been allowed to go to the lengths that have stirred up the volatile natives to war. If the Cabinets of the powers could have kept their fingers on the pulse of events the brave men whose headless bodies lie buried at Apia would have been still alive. Have we not paid rather dearly for the economy that has kept the Pacific shut off from the telegraphic nerve system of the world?

#### PROGRESS OF MUNICIPAL GAS.

Scarcely a week, and certainly not a month, passes in England which does not witness the transfer of some gas enterprise from private to public management. The final and decisive argument in favor of city ownership and management is the fact that the control of a necessary of life should not be handed over to a private company, however carefully its conduct may be watched. Cases are constantly arising in which the legitimate interests of a private corporation will be directly in the way of the public interest.

Take the case of a considerable lowering of the price of gas to the consumer, which is now imperatively called for by the industrial and social interests of the city. A municipality will find it greatly to its advantage to sacrifice for a time its profits for the sake of furthering the consumption of an article which performs such valuable services. As a matter of fact, the demonstration of the speed with which the consumption of gas may follow a reduction in its price was reserved for government undertakings, the municipal corporations of England first having taught the private companies the possibilities which lay in a lower price.

These are the conclusions of the whole question.

A good supply of pure and rich gas at low prices is now an absolute necessity of life in our modern city, both to the home and to the efficiency of industry and trade.

The technical and administrative conditions of the manufacture and distribution of gas make the business a practical monopoly. One must then choose between a monopoly managed by the public in the interests of the public and a monopoly by private parties.

The argument against public management that it is more expensive than private management is false in reason and in fact, since a careful analysis shows reasons why public agencies can, as a rule, manufacture more cheaply than private companies, and a study of statistics confirms this. The business of furnishing a necessary of life which can be carried on only in the form of a monopoly is never safe in the hands of a private company, which we know goes into the legislature and the council, buying up councilmen and legislators in the most shameless way, bribing inspecting officers and not stopping at anything that promises success. But, on the other hand, it is possible to rectify whatever corruption there may be in public management by improving the public service by a properly organized system.

The testimony of a most distinguished American gas engineer, Mr. Greenough, in a speech some years ago before the New England Association of Engineers, is valuable:

If any city in this country should see fit to purchase the rights and property of existing gas corporations, and would operate them with even a moderate degree of regard for the public good, there is no doubt that in most cases it would be highly advantageous. The most entire publicity would, of course, be given to the business, the public, at all events, could fix its own price, and the city could borrow money at lower rates than any private citizen would be content to risk his capital for.

We have already made great mistakes in allowing the policy of competition to force an amount of capital into these enterprises which make cheap gas almost impossible. We should make another quite as great if we allowed private companies to make this capital the excuse for plundering the consumer for the next twenty-five or fifty years.

#### SHAFTER ADMIRER THE BEEF.

General Shafter came all the way from California to tell the Court of Inquiry that the beef furnished the army in Cuba was good. He admitted that it was "unpalatable, uninviting and without taste," but insisted that "it was not unfit for food."

A man with so little stomach for fighting as Shafter had was in no danger of having his digestion impaired by the carrion-like stuff labelled "roast beef." Fed upon cooling drinks and delicacies, safely trussed up in a hammock so far from the fighting line that he could not be found with a search warrant, he could not conceive of the suffering his soldiers endured in the trenches. They fell weak and sick under a tropic sun rather than eat the slimy, decaying, poisonous stuff which Shafter now swears "was not unfit for food."

Hundreds of officers who did not want to retreat at Santiago and who did face Spanish bullets have testified that disease and death lurked in the canned beef. Thousands of private soldiers have also borne witness to the disgusting character of this ration. And the force of their testimony cannot be shaken by anything Shafter may say.

Of course it is only a coincidence that Alger, who is involved in this beef scandal, was responsible for Shafter's selection as commander of the Santiago campaign.

#### CONDENSED EDITORIALS.

MATTHEW STANLEY QUAY, who is making a desperate effort to keep from being elected to the Pennsylvania penitentiary, can rightfully claim that a pressing previous engagement forbids him from accepting the courteous invitation of his Republican opponents to discuss the Senatorial question.

THE SOCIETY for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals should get on the trail of the inhuman owner that named a thoroughbred horse General Shafter. The unfortunate beast started in a race at Memphis Wednesday, and of course finished among the "also rans."

WHEN ADMIRAL DREWY hears the echo of New York's hearty welcome to the Raleigh he will get a faint idea of what will happen when this imperial city sets eyes on him.

OUR CHASTE CONTEMPORARY the Times, whose specialty is the publication of "all the news that's fit to print," heads its column of Newport society gossip with this item:

The handsome new bedstead for Mr. and Mrs. J. J., which was made in New York for use at J. J.'s, arrived.

Out of respect for the feelings of the young couple, the Journal puts blanks in this important piece of information where its "All the news that's fit to print" contemporary printed names.

#### Turn the Light on Platt's Sons.

[Ethics Observer.]

The professions of independence and lofty purpose that the Assembly Investigating Committee are making prompt the New York Journal to make a suggestion. It suggests that Senator Platt's son be called upon the stand and asked these questions: What is your occupation? Could you make a living if your father's political pull did not back business to your bond company and your law firm?

Did you undertake to get the Astoria gas grab through the Legislature for a retaining fee of \$500,000?

Have you been trying to give Lauterbach and the Third Avenue Railroad Company the privilege of killing children on Amsterdam avenue?

What are your methods of persuading legislators to look at public questions from your point of view?

These questions are not of the sandbagging kind, such as were permitted in the Lexow investigation. But the answers to them would be highly interesting and instructive on the subject "how we are governed."

## HE DIDN'T HEAR ANY REPORTS.



SHAFTER (before the War Commission)—"I didn't hear any reports of bad beef." (How could he? He didn't hear the reports of cannon at El Caney and San Juan.)

## FINE PLAY, WITH A MISTAKE IN IT. ALAN DALE'S IDEA OF "RUPERT OF HENTZAU."

AFTER the scarlet hip-burrah of an opening performance, it is pleasant to sit in that comparatively placid atmosphere of soothing syrup belonging to a "third night." This I did in the case of "Rupert of Hentzau," at the Lyceum. With ushers quiescent, friends absent, uproarious "first-nighters" far away, it was very easy to testify to the emphatic success of this new Hope production. And when you come to think that a play almost as pulsating as "The Prisoner of Zenda" has been made out of "The Prisoner of Zenda's" discarded characters, you realize how fresh "fresh," in its non-sluggish sense, please) Anthony Hope was before he reached the state of "Phroso" exhaustion.

I never read "Rupert of Hentzau." I thought it a greedy and cowardly thing for Hope-Hawkins to try and wring a few more dollars out of Flavia and Rassendyll, who had yielded as richly. When an author has said good-bye to types so charming, it seemed to me that it was cruel to break out in a new place. After all, a man owes something to the creations of his own brain.

So I went to the Lyceum quite prepared to be bored, and stayed until there was absolutely nothing more left of Rassendyll and the King to weave into a third attempt. And, strange to say, this delightful "Zenda" opened at a new page, was as fascinating, as potent, and as exciting as the original play. We have got into the habit of speaking of "Zenda" stories as "that sort of thing." We have included all Hope's imitations of himself in the category. But "Rupert of Hentzau" is not "that sort of thing." It is a continuation of "Zenda" very cleverly done.

Of course you will not understand "Rupert of Hentzau" unless you have read "The Prisoner of Zenda." But if you have not read "The Prisoner of Zenda," where on earth have you been keeping yourself? Mr. Frohman does not seem to be quite sure that everybody has read it, for he sets forth a bleak synopsis of its points. Of course there may be a few people from the very wild West and Philadelphia—who have not yet reached the original Hope romance.

"Zenda" ends with the separation of Flavia and Rassendyll, with nothing but a yearly rose to remind the one of the other. "Rupert of Hentzau" begins with the sending of the rose and a rather unpromising letter written in fond despair by Flavia to Rassendyll. The box containing these tributes falls into the hands of the dreadful Rupert of Hentzau, who intends to show them to

Flavia's husband, and the play is devoted to showing how young Rassendyll foils this villain, and finally, in a vehement fight, causes Rupert's timely death.

It is all very excitingly done, and marvellously easy to follow. The trouble with "that sort of thing" is that it is as unintelligible as comic opera. But "Rupert of Hentzau" is the genuine article, and Rassendyll redivivus is keenly entertaining. I can't forgive "Zenda" for leading us into that dreadful "Musketeer" imbroglio. I shall never forgive it for that. But "Rupert of Hentzau" comes naturally to us, and it is as simple, swift, forceful, poetic, fascinating and bewitching as "Zenda" itself. Its fault is its ending.

High art may clamor for it, but there are times when it is a good thing to listen to popular ideas. James K. Hackett, when he started upon his career, had nothing to recommend him but his height. I have estimated that to a leading actor every inch in stature over five-foot-eight is worth at least fifty dollars a week. Over six feet, the leading actor can name his own terms. This is not an era for plagues. Badly handicapped as he was by his fatal stoniness, Hackett seems to have buckled to it. He does the best work I have ever seen him do in "Rupert of Hentzau." His scene with King in the fourth act, when he renounces the temptation to become king, was a capital bit of quiet and pathetic acting. Of the duel it is not necessary to speak. It is one of those gallery episodes that appeal to every man's innate cruelty and that always "go." As the King, Hackett was less acceptable. He made of that monarch a sort of hysterical, faltering person, devoid of all harmony with his surroundings. The quick slips from one character to the other were excellent bits of "lightning change," most ingeniously contrived to awaken the admiration of a polite audience.

But the Flavia! Oh, Johanna, Johanna! Why act thou so lovely, yet so stupidly? There never could be a handsomer Flavia than this tall, sweet (the Duchess always calls "em sweetie) girl, who looked as though she could try on dresses all day for pattern plates. But Miss Howland—like the doves on the mast—"mourned, and mourned, and mourned." She has not yet learned how to smile. Under the circumstances you felt consoled at the thought of the dual death. Life with this lugubrious lady would be one long black crape agony. Miss Howland made all the expressiveness of a gramophone, made to sing one and lay ad nauseam. She was as bad as a case of grip. You thought you had shaken her off—but lo! the ill effects remained to torture you. Arthur Hoops as Rupert of Hentzau was satisfactory in the dual scene only. His lackadaisical manner was ill assumed. He wore it too loosely. Theodore Roberts was not as noisy as Sapt as Rowland Buckstone. Brigham Royce, Robert Elliott and George Allen were three highly expatriated and well-seasoned youths, and the various servants were all good. Miss Gips and the various servants were all good. Miss Gips and the various servants were all good. Miss Gips and the various servants were all good.

After dragging you through two plays of Flavia and Rassendyll, and showing you that picturesque twain in all sorts and conditions of spectacular affection, it seems rather cruel to kill poor Rassendyll—as well as the King—at the end, and send you home to the tune of a marché funèbre. Perhaps Anthony Hope felt that if he left Rassendyll still alive he would never be able to resist the temptation of taking him up again. Of course, artistically, I suppose "twas best for him and best for us." There is no real beauty in those happy endings that send a couple trotting into his amber glades of "happily ever after." But in the case of Flavia and Rassendyll—and remembering how extremely fond of them we were—I think

it would have been pardonable to allow the young man to succeed to the throne, and sit there ever after in the sweet domesticity of more boiled mutton, with Flavia.

As it was, we went home dissatisfied. We had really taken a great deal of trouble to closely follow the careers of these amiable types—only to find ourselves in the end de sac of tragedy. No happiness for Flavia and Rassendyll! No children and baby carriages! No happy future in Hurlstania! Nothing but the picture of a doubly-widowed Flavia in mourning gowns, left to grow up to soiled old ladyhood all by herself. It was very vexing, when you had interested yourself so completely in their doings. The final tableau of "Rupert of Hentzau" is a mistake—a sad mistake. High art may clamor for it, but there are times when it is a good thing to listen to popular ideas.

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## BAD YEAR FOR EUROPEAN TRIPS IF THE PLANS OF THE 400 ARE A SIGN.

THE first Spring day brought out plans for Summer. There is no doubt that people this year will stay at home. There are really very few of our set abroad, and those who are will only remain to get a sniff at the London season and some Paris clothes. The first of June, hardly eight weeks off, will see them all back again.

The Spring crop of weddings has petered out and there are a few next week only, and then we will have a revival of several of the little scandals which have been sleeping these days. The weddings yesterday were many, and some of the usual practical jokes were performed on the going-away couples.

One of the carriages was bedecked with white ribbons. All the spokees were done up in this material and the doors had big bows of the same material. The horses' heads were decorated with Easter lilies and the coachman and best man had enormous bouquets, and the whip was also decorated with white satin ribbon. There was a white satin slipper on the top of the carriage and a big bow behind.

The Bradley Martins will be dined a little during their short stay in the city, but Mrs. Bradley Martin has sung her swan song in regard to entertaining here. The fancy ball was the last thing she ever attempted. She has never forgiven New York society for the way in which they accepted

her hospitality and then made fun of the affair. Since her daughter's marriage to an earl and the cousin of Cadogan, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Mrs. Bradley Martin and Mr. Bradley Martin as well have become English people, like the Astors, and their entertainments in London will not see an array of Americans as some New Yorkers fondly hope.

There have been very few of her old friends entertained at Balnassan this or any other year. To be very smart, one must begin by being nice. American, and the Bradley Martins are now to sell their last possessions in this country and bid farewell to it forever.

CHOLLY KNICKERBOCKER.